

Key Spouse Program

Training



BACKGROUND



- Navy Ombudsman Program
- 1997 Air Force Pilot Program
 - Five test bases
 - High deployment tempo
 - One Ombudsman per base
 - Support during deployments



WHAT WORKED :

- Marketing - increased awareness
- Collaborative effort
- Paid GS position
 - Part of the Readiness “Team”
 - Launched Key Spouse Program

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Ombudsman's role as a source for assistance to families was never fully utilized
- Families continued to seek established resources, such as the FSC, Chapel
- Families also received one-on-one information from unit Key Spouses

WHY A KEY SPOUSE?



- *Based on:*
 - View of support...
 - Areas of concern...
 - Needs... ***of spouses***

SUPPORT FOR KEY SPOUSE

- Commander
- Commander's Spouse
- First Sergeant
- Active Duty Member
- Spouse
- Family Support Center



SPOUSE CONCERNS

- Loneliness, lack of companionship
- Making decisions alone
- Disciplining children
- Adequate social outlets
- Handling finances
- Feeling the unit is unconcerned about their well being



SPOUSE NEEDS

- Someone who cares to listen
- To feel someone understands experiences
- Spouses are competent, but need to know resources available in the community
- When distressed, can seek out someone who will listen to expresses feelings
- Timely information about military member
- arrived safely, comfortable, and is "O.K."

UNIT KEY SPOUSES

- Families want the **unit** level involvement
- Importance of being a **peer**
- Larger units thrive with multiple key spouses.
- The Key Spouse can be an enhancement Unit Team (CC, CC's Spouse, 1st Sgt)

MILDENHALL'S PROGRAM

- Collaborative effort between:
 - ***Volunteer - Unit - FSC***
- Unit-based spouse volunteer
- Appointed by unit (CC/1st Sgt)
- Coordinated by Family Support Center



BENEFITS & SUPPORT

- Base volunteer program
 - Experience for future jobs
 - Recognition - annual ceremony
 - Child care - Air Force Aid funded
- Training - initial & ongoing (FSC)
- Supervision (unit)
- Office use (unit)/computers (FSC)

ROLE OF KEY SPOUSE

- Defined by Unit
- Point of information & support to families in the unit
- Someone to listen, point in the right direction
- Work closely with unit team
- Linked with the FSC

A KEY SPOUSE...

- **Does:**

- Contact
- Listen
- Inform
- Support



- **Does Not:**

- “Counsel”
- Represent or contact agencies on behalf of individuals
- Gossip



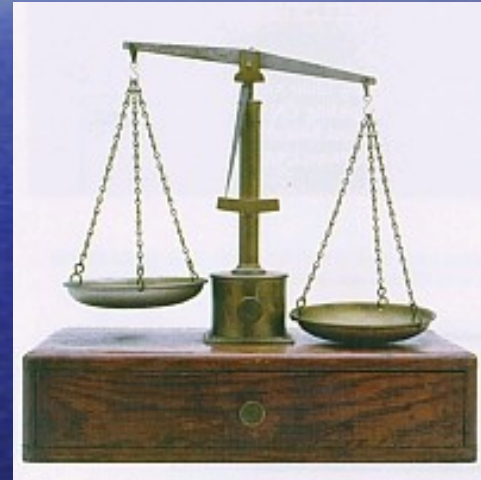
RESPONSIBILITIES



- Ethics & Confidentially
- Follow unit guidelines
- Use chain of command
- Attend trainings and meetings

ETHICS & CONFIDENTIALITY

- Most critical element
- Required concerning personal, sensitive information
- Directed by 1st Sgt
- Defined by CC
- For Official Use Only
- Need to know basis



- ***Exception:***
 - ***Harm to self/others***
 - ***MUST report to 1st Sgt/CC***

WORKING WITH CC SPOUSE

- Commander's Spouse
 - First to welcome
 - Holiday events
 - Support group
 - Births/deaths/illness
 - Newsletters
 - Farewell
- Unit Spouse
 - Support adjustment
 - Inform
 - Suggestions, calls
 - Support, referrals
 - Write/print/distribute
 - Refer to resources

WORKING WITH 1ST SGT

- Selection Process
- POC for routine, day to day matters
- Valuable resource-get things done
- Be honest, open, professional
- Keep them informed
- Recognize 1st Sgt's role in Squadron
 - Responsible for everyone in the unit

WORKING WITH FSC

- FSC provides:
 - Training
 - Orientation
 - Ongoing-monthly basis
 - Support
 - Computers, space, newsletter
 - ***Mentorship!***



TRANSITIONS

- Key Spouse
 - Give notice
 - Pass on materials
- New 1st Sgt/CC
 - Meetings/Discussions



Program Enhancements:

- Fund printing of spouse group newsletter
- Keynotes monthly newsletter
- Appointment letters from unit
- Roundtable discussion at meetings
- Job descriptions
- Post photo/poster in unit
- Increase public awareness



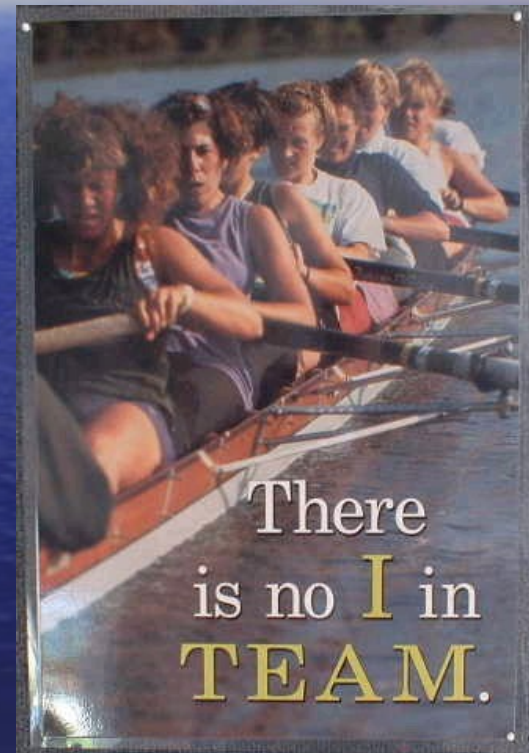
Feedback From a Test Base:

“As one of the Air Forces test bases for this program, I can honestly say it’s super.”

“It makes it much easier for me to deal with families when they know that they have someone to talk to that can relate to the situations faced by family members.”

- David A. Sousa, MSgt, USAF, 100 CE/CCF

- **The Key Spouse Program:**
 - ***VOLUNTEERS***
 - ***UNITS***
 - ***FSC***
- **“A Winning Combination!”**



AIR FORCE WIDE!

- FSC staff participated in Outreach Working Group at Pentagon
- Developed draft AF implementation plan
- Modeled after RAF Mildenhall's successful Key Spouse Program!
 - unit based spouse volunteer
 - collaborative-unit/volunteer/fsc



QUESTIONS?

POCs:

